



National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau

NCCIC

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NATIONAL ACCREDITATION ORGANIZATIONS for EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Accreditation is a voluntary process designed to improve the quality of early care and education programs. Achieving accreditation involves extensive self-study and validation by professionals outside the program to verify that quality standards are met. Research has demonstrated that accreditation positively impacts early care and education program quality, including benefits to children, staff, and families. Accreditation systems require early care and education programs to meet standards that exceed minimum State regulatory requirements.

A number of organizations have developed accreditation systems to recognize early care and education programs that generally meet higher standards than are required by State regulations. Listed below is a sample of national accreditation systems for early care and education programs, listed in alphabetical order.

■ **Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Early Education Services**

P.O. Box 65130

Colorado Springs, CO 80962-5130

719-528-6906, ext. 228

World Wide Web: <http://www.acsi.org>

E-mail: earlyeducation@acsi.org

ACSI is a nonprofit organization, founded in 1978 through a merger of three Christian school associations. Programs and services are designed to assist Christian schools at every grade level including early education and higher education. Information about ACSI accreditation is available on the Web at <http://www.acsi.org/web2003/default.aspx?ID=883>.

■ **Council on Accreditation (COA)**

120 Wall Street, 11th Floor

New York, NY 10005

212-797-3000 or 866-COA-8088

World Wide Web: <http://www.coanet.org>

E-mail: coainfo@coanet.org

COA is an international, independent, nonprofit, child- and family-service and behavioral healthcare accrediting organization. Founded in 1977 by the Child Welfare League of America and Family Service America, COA partners with human service organizations worldwide to improve service delivery outcomes by developing, applying, and promoting accreditation standards. Originally known as an accrediting body for family and children's agencies, COA

now accredits 38 different service areas, including substance abuse treatment, adult day care, services for the homeless, foster care, and intercountry adoption.

COA's accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of an organization's administrative operations and service delivery against national standards of best practice. All of an organization's programs for which COA has standards are subject to review—COA reviews and accredits the entire organization, not specific programs. As is fitting with its mission and values, COA's accreditation process is designed to facilitate organizational improvement. COA views accreditation as a structured means of achieving positive organizational change.

Additional information about accreditation is available on the Web at <http://www.coanet.org/front-end/page.cfm?sect=3>.

- **National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC)**
National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP)
P.O. Box 90723
Austin, TX 78709
800-537-1118 or 512-301-5557
World Wide Web: <http://www.naccp.org>
E-mail: admin@naccp.org

NACCP is a membership organization for child care owners, directors, and administrators. NACCP manages NAC. The components of NAC standards include the following: program philosophy and goals, health and safety, administration, parent communication, curriculum, and interaction between staff and children. Additional information about accreditation is available on the Web at <http://www.naccp.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=5>.

NAC has a faith-based component as a response to weekday programs seeking to extend their ministry and/or to improve the relationship with a sponsoring organization of faith. Additional information about the faith-based component of NAC is available on the Web at <http://www.naccp.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=77>.

- **National Accreditation Council for Early Childhood Professional Personnel and Programs (NACECPPP)**
3612 Bent Branch Court
Falls Church, VA 22041
703-941-4329

NACECPPP is a national, nonprofit organization established in response to needs identified by the center-based, private-licensed, and religious early childhood community nationwide under the sponsorship of the Child Care Institute of America, the national association representing that community. For additional information, contact William Tobin, Executive Director, Early Childhood Development Center Legislative Coalition at 703-941-4329.

- **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**
NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation
1509 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036-1426

800-424-2460 or 202-232-8777, ext. 11360

World Wide Web: <http://www.naeyc.org>

E-mail: accreditation.information@naeyc.org

Founded in 1926, NAEYC is the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children with more than 100,000 members and a national network of nearly 450 local, State, and regional Affiliates. In 1985, NAEYC established a national, voluntary accreditation system to set professional standards for early childhood education programs and to help families identify high-quality programs. The NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation administers a national, voluntary accreditation system to help raise the quality of all types of preschools, kindergartens, and child care centers.

The NAEYC Accreditation Criteria address all aspects of an early childhood program, including interactions among teachers and children, curriculum, interactions among teachers and families, administration, staff qualifications and professional development, staffing patterns, physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service, and program evaluation. Significant growth in and demands on the accreditation system led the NAEYC Governing Board to establish a project to reinvent accreditation by developing new program standards, criteria, and assessment procedures and by taking immediate steps to improve the reliability and accountability of the system while better managing the demand for accreditation. The transition to the next era of NAEYC Accreditation is now underway, with full implementation scheduled to occur by 2006.

The new NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Performance Criteria were approved by the NAEYC Governing Board in April 2005. They take effect in September 2006, replacing the current ("1998") Accreditation Criteria. New self-study materials based on the new standards and criteria will be released at the NAEYC Annual Conference—December 7–10, 2005 in Washington, DC. Information about the NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Performance Criteria is available on the Web at <http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation/050415.asp>. Additional information about accreditation is available on the Web at <http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation/academy.asp>.

■ **National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)**

5202 Pinemont Drive

Salt Lake City, UT 84123

800-359-3817 or 801-269-9338

World Wide Web: <http://www.nafcc.org>

E-mail: accreditation@nafcc.org

NAFCC is a national membership organization working with more than 400 State and local family child care provider associations across the United States. The mission of NAFCC is to support the profession of family child care and to encourage high-quality care for children. The focus of NAFCC is to provide technical assistance to family child care associations. This assistance is provided through developing leadership and professionalism, addressing issues of diversity, and promoting quality and professionalism through NAFCC's Family Child Care Accreditation.

Accreditation was designed to promote and recognize high-quality, professional family child care. NAFCC Accreditation standards cover the following content areas: relationships, environment, activities, developmental learning goals, safety and health, and professional and business practices. *Quality Standards for NAFCC Accreditation, Third Edition 2003*, sponsored by the National Association for Family Child Care, developed by the Family Child Care Accreditation Project, Wheelock College, is available on the Web at <http://www.nafcc.org/books/qual03.pdf>. Additional information about accreditation is available on the Web at <http://www.nafcc.org/accred/accred.html>.

■ **National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)**

The NECPA Commission, Inc.
1150 Hungryneck Boulevard, Suite C305
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464
800-505-9878
World Wide Web: <http://www.necpa.net>
E-mail: info@necpa.net

NECPA is a voluntary accreditation for programs serving children ages 0–5 years. The NECPA program is an Automated Accreditation Indicator System (AAIS). This system and the instrument itself were developed by Dr. Richard Fiene, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Education Programs Department of Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg. The NECPA self-assessment instrument is based upon criteria in the following component areas: administration and general operations, professional development and work environment, indoor environment, outdoor environment, developmental programs, parent and community involvement, formal school linkages, and health and safety.

■ **National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA)**

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
1333 South Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295
888-843-5267 or 314-965-9000
World Wide Web: <http://lcms.org>
E-mail: NLSAoffice@lcms.org

NLSA is available for every school operated by a single congregation, by an association of congregations, or by a Recognized Service Organization of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or the Lutheran Church—Canada. NLSA is a national accrediting process designed to evaluate schools based on their unique purpose as Lutheran schools. NLSA is for early childhood, elementary, and secondary schools.

The *NLSA Standards Manual* is available on the Web at <http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/DCS/standards.pdf>. Freestanding early childhood centers that desire accreditation also with NAEYC may use the “Guide for Evaluating the Mission of Freestanding Early Childhood Centers,” which, when completed, allows centers to be accredited by NLSA through an abbreviated process if they gain NAEYC accreditation. Additional information is available on the NLSA Web site at <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=1741>.

■ **National AfterSchool Association (NAA)**

1137 Washington Street, 2nd Floor

Dorchester, MA 02124

617-298-5012

World Wide Web: <http://www.naaweb.org>

NAA (formerly the National School-Age Care Alliance), founded in 1987, is a professional association with membership that includes more than 7,000 practitioners, policy-makers, and administrators representing all public, private, and community-based sectors of after-school and out-of-school time programs, as well as school-age and after-school programs on military bases, both domestic and international. NAA provides a voice for the after-school profession, and is dedicated to the development, education, and care of children and youth during their out-of-school hours. Information about NAA's accreditation is available on the Web at <http://www.naaweb.org/accreditation.htm>.

Additional Information

Accreditation systems require early care and education programs to meet standards that exceed minimum State regulatory requirements. However, the steps between State licensing and achieving national accreditation are often significant. Eleven States have developed a Statewide Quality Rating System (QRS) as a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings. Ten of these States include accreditation in their QRS, although how it is included varies. Additional information about QRS is available under the Quality Rating Systems topic in the Popular Topics section of the NCCIC Web site at <http://nccic.org/poptopics/index.html#qrs>.

The National Child Care Information Center does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource.